

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE IN NEED OF MEDICAL CARE Human rights defender **Saud al-Hashimi** is reported to have recently suffered two strokes and is in urgent need of medical care. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Human rights defender and prisoner of conscience **Dr Saud al-Hashimi** is serving a 30-year sentence in Dhaban Prison in Jeddah, western Saudi Arabia. According to information provided to Amnesty International, he has recently suffered two strokes, for which he has not been provided adequate medical attention. The first stroke occurred approximately three months ago and the second approximately 11 days ago. Although he has been seen by prison doctors, Saud al-Hashimi has not been given appropriate medical tests or transferred to a hospital where he can receive specialized treatment.

It is understood by Amnesty International that Saud al-Hashimi suffers from a range of other long-term health complaints, including high cholesterol, anaemia, severe inflammation of his joints and problems with balance and bouts of dizziness. He has only received intermittent medication and the prison authorities have failed to provide him with the special diet he requires for these conditions. Saud al-Hashimi is currently held in a very small cell with no windows or ventilation and he has been denied access to an exercise bike to help reduce his cholesterol levels.

In November 2011, the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh sentenced Saud al-Hashimi to 30 years' imprisonment, to be followed by a 30-year travel ban and a fine of 2 million riyals (approximately US\$ 534,000) after he was convicted of, among other charges, disobeying Saudi Arabia's king, forming an organization opposing the state, money laundering and "supporting terrorism". Saud al-Hashimi has previously reported being tortured and otherwise ill-treated on at least three occasions since his arrest along with eight other men in February 2007.

Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Calling on the Saudi Arabian authorities to ensure that Saud al-Hashimi's conviction is quashed, and to release him immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association;
- Urging them, in the meantime, to provide Saud al-Hashimi with immediate access to adequate medical treatment for his conditions and access to regular check-ups in hospitals where he can receive specialist care;
- Urging them to ensure that Saud al-Hashimi is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 OCTOBER 2016 TO:

King and Prime Minister

His Majesty Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: (via Ministry of the Interior)
+966 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)
Twitter: @KingSalman
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Interior

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
Minister of Interior
Ministry of the Interior, P.O. Box 2933,
Airport Road, Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 403 3125
Twitter: @M_Naif_Alsaud
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Human Rights Commission
Bandar Mohammed 'Abdullah al-Aiban
P.O. Box 58889, Riyadh 11515
King Fahd Road
Building No. 3, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 418 510

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 312/08. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE23/001/2011/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr Saud al-Hashimi and eight other lawyers, activists and academics were detained in February 2007 in the cities of Jeddah and Medina and accused by the Ministry of Interior of collecting money to support terrorism after they circulated a petition calling for political reform and discussed a proposal to establish an independent human rights organization in Saudi Arabia. Seven other men connected with Saud al-Hashimi were arrested subsequently. All 16 were held without charge until August 2010 when they were formally charged.

In June 2009, Saud al-Hashimi went on hunger strike in Dhaban Prison for over a week. He said that, as punishment for his protest, he was tortured; he was stripped of all his clothes, except his underwear, shackled and dragged from his cell, placed in a severely cold cell for about five hours, and forced to sign a “confession”. In October and December 2010 he again reported having been tortured into signing a statement confessing to allegations against him and stating that he did not want a lawyer during his court sessions. Days later, on 1 January 2011, he was brought before a judge, but, when he tried to explain that he had signed under duress, the judge neither responded nor took any action with regards to his allegations.

His trial at the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC), a special security and counter-terrorism court, was grossly unfair and the charges related merely to the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association. He was tried with 15 others, who received from five to 22 years’ imprisonment and travel bans to apply for between 10 and 20 years after release.

Amongst those tried alongside Saud al-Hashimi was Sheikh Suliaman al-Rashudi, an 80-year-old former judge and lawyer, and a founding member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA). He is currently serving a 15-year prison sentence after he was convicted on 22 November 2011 of several charges including “breaking allegiance to the ruler, disobeying him”, and “participating in forming an organization called Tawasso in order to spread chaos under the cover of advice and reform”.

Since 2011 the Saudi Arabian authorities have been targeting civil society activists and human rights defenders, including members of ACPRA, using both the courts and other administrative measures such as the imposition of travel bans as a means to harass, intimidate and impede their work in the defence of human rights. By early 2014 most of Saudi Arabia’s prominent human rights defenders had been imprisoned or scared into silence, or had fled the country. Most of them had already been subjected to arbitrary travel bans, and had been intimidated and harassed by the security forces, particularly the Ministry of Interior’s General Directorate of Investigations (GDI, also known as al-Mabahith), before being prosecuted and given harsh sentences.

Since February 2014, the authorities have used the new counter-terror law to further target human rights activists and peaceful dissidents. At least two detained ACPRA members have seen their cases reopened under the new counter-terror law at the SCC, years after the SCC or another court had convicted them of the same offences under other laws and sentenced them to prison terms. Three other ACPRA members, including Dr Abdulrahman al-Hami, have been brought to trial before the SCC since the new counter-terror law was introduced.

Name: Dr Saud al-Hashimi
Gender m/f: m

Further information UA: 312/08 Index: MDE 23/4835/2016 Issue Date: 15 September 2016